
THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF UTAH

DWAYNE TAYLOR ROWLAND JR.,

Plaintiff,

v.

LT. ANDRESEN et al.,

Defendants.

**MEMORANDUM DECISION & ORDER
TO CURE DEFICIENT COMPLAINT**

Case No. 2:23-CV-280-DAK

District Judge Dale A. Kimball

Plaintiff, self-represented inmate Dwayne Taylor Rowland Jr., brings this civil-rights action. *See* 42 U.S.C.S. § 1983 (2023). Having now screened the Complaint, (ECF No. 1), under its statutory review function, 28 U.S.C.S. § 1915A (2023), the Court orders Plaintiff to file an amended complaint to cure deficiencies before further pursuing claims.

COMPLAINT'S DEFICIENCIES

Complaint:

(a) does not properly affirmatively link some specific civil-rights violations to Defendants. (See below.)

(b) inappropriately alleges civil-rights violations on a respondeat-superior theory. (See below.)

(c) seeks injunctive relief inside Purgatory Correctional Facility, when Plaintiff appears to be no longer incarcerated there. *See Jordan v. Sosa*, 654 F.3d 1012, 1027 (10th Cir. 2011) ("Where the prisoner's claims for declaratory or injunctive relief relate solely to the conditions of confinement at the penal institution at which the prisoner is no longer incarcerated, courts have concluded that they are unable to provide the prisoner with effective relief.").

(d) does not appear to state a proper legal-access claim. (See below.)

(e) improperly asks for "an injunction to reopen my [state] post conviction relief case," when the correct way to challenge (state post-conviction decisions) in federal court is to timely exhaust any federal claims in the direct appeal and/or state-post-conviction process (through to Utah

Supreme Court review), then timely bring those federal constitutional claims to this Court in a federal habeas-corpus petition, under 28 U.S.C.S. § 2254 (2023).

(f) purports to sue Defendant Andresen "in both his individual and official capacity, because the plaintiff does not know specifically which deputy on duty July 29 and 30 did not pick up the mail from the box in Section J," which evinces a lack of understanding of what it means to sue in a defendant in an official capacity and the sovereign immunity that may flow from suing in an official capacity. (See below.)

GUIDANCE FOR PLAINTIFF

Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires a complaint to contain "(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction . . .; (2) a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief; and (3) a demand for the relief sought." Rule 8's requirements mean to guarantee "that defendants enjoy fair notice of what the claims against them are and the grounds upon which they rest." *TV Commc'ns Network, Inc. v ESPN, Inc.*, 767 F. Supp. 1062, 1069 (D. Colo. 1991).

Pro se litigants are not excused from meeting these minimal pleading demands. "This is so because a pro se plaintiff requires no special legal training to recount the facts surrounding his alleged injury, and he must provide such facts if the court is to determine whether he makes out a claim on which relief can be granted." *Hall v. Bellmon*, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991). Moreover, it is improper for the Court "to assume the role of advocate for a pro se litigant." *Id.* Thus, the Court cannot "supply additional facts, [or] construct a legal theory for plaintiff that assumes facts that have not been pleaded." *Dunn v. White*, 880 F.2d 1188, 1197 (10th Cir. 1989).

Plaintiff should consider these general points before filing an amended complaint:

(i) The revised complaint must stand entirely on its own and shall not refer to, or incorporate by reference, any portion of the original complaint. *See Murray v. Archambo*, 132 F.3d 609, 612

(10th Cir. 1998) (stating amended complaint supersedes original). The amended complaint may also not be added to after it is filed without moving for amendment. Fed. R. Civ. P. 15.

(ii) The complaint must clearly state what each individual defendant--typically, a named government employee--did to violate Plaintiff's civil rights. *See Bennett v. Passic*, 545 F.2d 1260, 1262-63 (10th Cir. 1976) (stating personal participation of each named defendant is essential allegation in civil-rights action). "To state a claim, a complaint must 'make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what* to *whom*.'" *Stone v. Albert*, 338 F. App'x 757, 759 (10th Cir. 2009) (unpublished) (emphasis in original) (quoting *Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008)). Plaintiff should also include, as much as possible, specific dates or at least estimates of when alleged constitutional violations occurred.

(iii) Each cause of action, together with the facts and citations that directly support it, should be stated separately. Plaintiff should be as brief as possible while still using enough words to fully explain the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" of each claim. *Robbins*, 519 F.3d at 1248 ("The [*Bell Atlantic Corp. v.*] *Twombly* Court was particularly critical of complaints that 'mentioned no specific, time, place, or person involved in the alleged [claim].' [550 U.S. 544, 565] n.10 (2007). Given such a complaint, 'a defendant seeking to respond to plaintiff's conclusory allegations . . . would have little idea where to begin.' *Id.*").

(iv) Plaintiff may not name an individual as a defendant based solely on supervisory position. *See Mitchell v. Maynard*, 80 F.2d 1433, 1441 (10th Cir. 1996) (stating supervisory status alone does not support § 1983 liability).

(v) Grievance denial alone with no connection to "violation of constitutional rights alleged by plaintiff, does not establish personal participation under § 1983." *Gallagher v. Shelton*, 587 F.3d 1063, 1069 (10th Cir. 2009).

(vi) "No action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under . . . Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted." 42 U.S.C.S. § 1997e(a) (2023). However, Plaintiff need not include grievance details in the complaint. Exhaustion of administrative remedies is an affirmative defense that must be raised by defendants. *Jones v. Bock*, 549 U.S. 199, 216 (2007).

• **Affirmative link**

[A] plaintiff who brings a constitutional claim under § 1983 can't obtain relief without first satisfying the personal-participation requirement. That is, the plaintiff must demonstrate the defendant "personally participated in the alleged constitutional violation" at issue. *Vasquez v. Davis*, 882 F.3d 1270, 1275 (10th Cir. 2018). Indeed, because § 1983 is a "vehicle[]" for imposing personal liability on government officials, we have stressed the need for careful attention to particulars, especially in lawsuits involving multiple defendants." *Pahls v. Thomas*, 718 F.3d 1210, 1225 (10th Cir. 2013); *see also Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008) (explaining that when plaintiff brings § 1983 claims against multiple defendants, "it is particularly important . . . that the complaint make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what* to *whom*"); *Tonkovich v. Kan. Bd. of Regents*, 159 F.3d 504, 532-33 (10th Cir. 1998)) (holding that district court's analysis of plaintiff's § 1983 claims was "infirm" where district court "lump[ed]" together plaintiff's claims against multiple defendants--"despite the fact that each of the defendants had different powers and duties and took different actions with respect to [plaintiff]"--and "wholly failed to identify specific actions taken by particular defendants that could form the basis of [a constitutional] claim").

Estate of Roemer v. Johnson, 764 F. App'x 784, 790-91 (10th Cir. 2019).

"A plaintiff's failure to satisfy this requirement will trigger swift and certain dismissal." *Id.* at 790 n.5. Indeed, the Tenth Circuit has "gone so far as to suggest that failure to satisfy the personal-participation requirement will not only justify dismissal for failure to state a claim; it will render the plaintiff's claim frivolous." *Id.*

• Respondeat superior

The Supreme Court holds that, in asserting a § 1983 claim against a government agent in their individual capacity, "a plaintiff must plead that each Government-official defendant, through the official's own individual actions, has violated the Constitution." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 676 (2009). Consequently, there is no respondeat superior liability under § 1983. *See Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 676 ("Because vicarious liability is inapplicable to *Bivens* and § 1983 suits, a plaintiff must plead that each Government-official defendant, through the official's own individual actions, has violated the Constitution."); *Bd. of Cty. Comm'rs v. Brown*, 520 U.S. 397, 403 (1997). Entities may not be held liable on the sole ground of an employer-employee relationship with a claimed tortfeasor. *See Monell v. Dep't of Soc. Servs. of N.Y.*, 436 U.S. 658, 689 (1978). Supervisors are considered liable for their own unconstitutional or illegal policies only, and not for employees' tortious acts. *See Barney v. Pulsipher*, 143 F.3d 1299, 1307-08 (10th Cir. 1998).

• Legal access

The Court notes that Plaintiff's claim(s) involve legal access. As Plaintiff fashions the amended complaint, Plaintiff should keep in mind that it is well-recognized that prison inmates "have a constitutional right to 'adequate, effective, and meaningful' access to the courts and that the states have 'affirmative obligations' to assure all inmates such access." *Ramos v. Lamm*, 639

F.2d 559, 583 (10th Cir. 1980). In *Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1977), the Supreme Court expounded on the obligation to provide legal access by stating "the fundamental constitutional right of access to the courts requires prison authorities to assist inmates in the preparation and filing of meaningful legal papers by providing prisoners with adequate law libraries or adequate assistance from persons trained in the law." *Id.* at 828 (footnote omitted & emphasis added).

However, to successfully assert a constitutional claim for denial of access to courts, a plaintiff must allege not only inadequacy of the library or legal assistance provided but also "that the denial of legal resources hindered [the plaintiff's] efforts to pursue a nonfrivolous claim." *Penrod v. Zavaras*, 84 F.3d 1399, 1403 (10th Cir. 1996) (emphasis added); *Carper v. Deland*, 54 F.3d 613, 616 (10th Cir. 1995). In other words, a plaintiff must show that "denial or delay of access to the court prejudiced him in pursuing litigation." *Treff v. Galetka*, 74 F.3d 191, 194 (10th Cir. 1996). Moreover, the non-frivolous litigation involved must be "habeas corpus or civil rights actions regarding current confinement." *Carper*, 54 F.3d at 616; accord *Lewis v. Casey*, 518 U.S. 343, 353-55 (1996).

To properly state a legal-access claim, the amended complaint must "allege an actual injury"--i.e., "identify the specific legal claims [Plaintiff] raised in [his state post-conviction] proceedings, . . . explain why those claims were nonfrivolous, and . . . explain how those nonfrivolous claims were prejudiced by his inability to access law library materials," *Counts v. Wilson*, 854 F. App'x 948, 952 (10th Cir. 2021) (unpublished), and delay of his outgoing mail.

• Official capacity and sovereign immunity

The Eleventh Amendment constitutionalizes the doctrine of state sovereign immunity. It provides that "[t]he Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United

States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State." U.S. Const. amend. XI. Under this provision, states enjoy sovereign immunity from suit. *See Va. Off. for Prot. & Advocacy v. Stewart*, 563 U.S. 247, 253 (2011); *P.R. Aqueduct & Sewer Auth. v. Metcalf & Eddy, Inc.*, 506 U.S. 139, 144 (1993). This immunity extends to suits brought by citizens against their own state. *See Hans v. Louisiana*, 134 U.S. 1, 10-11; *Amisub (PSL), Inc. v. State of Colo. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 879 F.2d 789, 792 (10th Cir. 1989). It also extends to "suit[s] against a state official in his or her official capacity" because such suits are "no different from a suit against the State itself." *Will v. Mich. Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 71 (1989).

Eleventh Amendment immunity "is not absolute." *See Port Auth. Trans-Hudson Corp. v. Feeney*, 495 U.S. 299, 304 (1990). Under the *Ex parte Young* exception, a plaintiff may sue individual state officers acting in their official capacities if the complaint alleges an ongoing violation of federal law and the plaintiff seeks only prospective relief. *See Ex parte Young*, 209 U.S. 159-60; *Verizon Md. Inc. v. Pub. Serv. Comm'n of Md.*, 535 U.S. 635, 645 (2002).

Hendrickson v. AFSCME Council 18, 992 F.3d 950, 965 (10th Cir. 2021).

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

- (1) Plaintiff must within thirty days cure the Complaint's deficiencies noted above by filing a document entitled, "Amended Complaint," that does not refer to or include any other document. (ECF No. 1.)
- (2) The Clerk's Office shall mail Plaintiff the Pro Se Litigant Guide with a blank-form civil-rights complaint which Plaintiff must use if Plaintiff wishes to pursue an amended complaint.
- (3) If Plaintiff fails to timely cure the above deficiencies according to this Order's instructions, this action will be dismissed without further notice.

(4) The amended complaint shall not include any claims outside the dates and allegations of transactions and events contained in the Complaint, filed May 1, 2023, (ECF No. 1). The Court will not address any such new claims or outside allegations, which will be dismissed. If Plaintiff wishes to raise other claims and allegations, Plaintiff may do so only in a new complaint in a new case. If an amended complaint is filed, the Court will screen each claim and defendant for dismissal or an order effecting service upon valid defendants who are affirmatively linked to valid claims.

(5) Plaintiff shall not try to serve an amended complaint on any defendants; instead, the Court will perform its screening function and determine itself whether the second amended complaint warrants service or dismissal (in part or in full). No motion for service of process is needed. *See* 28 U.S.C.S. § 1915(d) (2023) ("The officers of the court shall issue and serve all process, and perform all duties in [*in forma pauperis*] cases.").

(6) Plaintiff must observe the following District of Utah local rule:

- (a) A party proceeding without an attorney (unrepresented party or pro se party) is obligated to comply with:
 - (1) the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure;
 - (2) these Local Rules of Practice;
 - (3) the Utah Standards of Professionalism and Civility; and
 - (4) other laws and rules relevant to the action.
- (b) An unrepresented party must immediately notify the Clerk's Office in writing of any name, mailing address, or email address changes.

DUCivR 83-1.6.

(7) Plaintiff's motion for service of process is **DENIED** as moot. (ECF No. 3.) There is no valid complaint on file as of this Order.

DATED this 30th day of January 2024.

BY THE COURT:



JUDGE DALE A. KIMBALL
United States District Court